

# ICHC NTKRA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America  
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## GOD IS WITH US! UNDERSTAND ALL NATIONS!

<b>December 19, 2010</b>	<b>Sunday of the Fathers of the Lord.</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>
December 24	Friday. Eve of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ	Vigil	7:00 pm
December 25	The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
December 26	Sunday. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Day of Christmas: Synaxis of the Mother of God	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

**Saints of the Day:** All those who have been well-pleasing to God since time began, from Adam to Joseph the Betrothed, according to the genealogy of the Evangelist Luke; and likewise the Prophets and Prophetesses.

**Please remember in your prayers:** Daniel, Aaron, Archpriest Jason, Archpriest Thomas, Priest Gabriel, Archpriest Jakiw, Archimandrite Raphael, Pani-matka Myroslava, Archpriest Daniel Pavelchak, Nina, Priest Sergius, Nadine, Helen, Anna, Thomas, Archpriest Vincent, Mother Raphaela, John, Catherine, Ron, Albert, Michael, Gregory, Emma, Cathy, John, Mykola, Dan, Wayne, Nina, Dan, Isaiah, Robert, Robert, Kevin, Andrew, David, Warren, Michael, Archimandrite Athanasys, Archimandrite Alexander, Archimandrite Isidore.

### Gleanings from Orthodox Christian Authors and the Holy Fathers on the Nativity of Christ

... He comes not as a fierce man of war, threatening all things living with death, but as a newly born babe, bringing the hope of rebirth and life into the entire realm of death; He comes--but the land of destruction does not meet, does not embrace, does not praise, does not even see its Saviour, and does not hear the Word of God keeping silence in a manger. Virtually in vain does the glory which Jesus Christ had with God the Father before the world was (John 17:5) on the lips of the angels, follow Him descending into the world and pursuing Him, attain even unto the earth. *Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow*

... The incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us. *Saint Athanasius the Great*

... Today the Lord is born, the life and salvation of mankind; today a reconciliation is made of Divinity to humanity, and of humanity to Divinity; today all creation has leapt for joy; those above sent toward those below; and those below towards those above; today occurred the death of darkness and the life of humanity; today a way was made toward God for man and a way for God into the soul. *Saint Macarius the Great*

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He became a servant on earth; He was Lord on high. Inheritor of the height and depth, Who became a stranger. But the One Who was judged wrongly will judge in truth, and He in Whose face they spat, breathed the spirit into the face. He Who held a weak reed was the scepter for the world that grows old and leans on Him. He Who stood [and] served His servants, sitting, will be worshipped. He Whom the Scribes scorned -- the Seraphim sang "holy" before Him. *Saint Ephraim the Syrian, Hymns on the Nativity*

He who sits at the right hand of the Father goes without shelter at the inn, that He may for us prepare many mansions in the house of His heavenly Father ... He was born, not in the house of His parents, but at the inn, by the wayside, because through the mystery of the Incarnation He is become the Way, by which He guides us to our home. *Venerable Bede*

Jesus Christ, radiant center of glory, image of our God, the invisible Father, revealer of His eternal designs, prince of peace; Father of the world to come. For our sake he took the likeness of a slave, becoming flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, for our sake, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger adored by the shepherds and hymned by the angelic powers, who sang: Glory to God in the heavens and on earth peace and good to men. Make us worthy, Lord, to celebrate and to conclude in peace the feast which magnifies the rising of Thy light, by avoiding empty words, working with justice, fleeing from the passions, and raising up the spirit above earthly goods. Bless Thy Church, formed long ago to be united with Thee through Thy life-giving blood. Come to the aid of Thy faithful shepherds, of the priests and the teachers of the Gospel. Bless Thy faithful whose only hope is in Thy mercy; Christian souls, the sick, those who are tormented in spirit, and those who have asked us to pray for them. Have pity, in Thy infinite clemency, and preserve us in fitness to receive the

future, endless, good things. We celebrate Thy glorious Nativity with the Father who sent thee for our redemption, with the life-giving Spirit, now and for ever and through all ages. Amen. *an ancient Syriac liturgy*

Joseph was amazed as he saw what was supernatural. He understood, O Virgin, the rain upon the fleece In thy conception without seed. And he understood the bush that burned without fire and was unconsumed, And Aaron's rod, which blossomed. Indeed, thy betrothed and guardian cried out to the priests: "A virgin gives birth, and after the birth remains a virgin. *The Kontakia of Romanos, Vol. II, On the Annunciation II*

Melchisedek anticipated Him; he the vicar was watching to see priesthood's Lord Whose hyssop cleanses creation. Lot saw the Sodomites who perverted nature; he looked for the Lord of natures Who gave chastity beyond nature. Aaron anticipated Him - he who saw that if his staff swallowed reptiles,

His cross would swallow the Reptile that swallowed Adam and Eve. Moses saw the fixed serpent that healed the stings of basilisks, and he anticipated he would see the Healer of the first Serpent's wound.

Moses saw that he alone received the brightness of God, and he anticipated the One to come - by His teaching, the Multiplier of the godlike. *Saint Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns (On the Nativity.)*

Nets and snares were fashioned, then, For the young fawn of the Virgin and Mother of God, But the trap was broken and the fawn escaped, tearing the snare.

With His mother, like a blameless deer, He fled Into Egypt, as Micah once said. O Thou Who art everywhere and Who rulest over all, where dost Thou flee?

Where dost Thou lead? In what city shalt Thou make Thy dwelling? What house will contain Thee, what place will support Thee? No part of creation anywhere is invisible to Thy sight, But all things are laid bare to Thee, Thou art the Maker of All, O Christ. Why, then, dost Thou flee, Holy One? Because of Thee, Herod mourns as he weeps That his power will soon be destroyed. *Saint Romanos the Melodist - On the Massacre of the Innocents (Flight into Egypt).*

The Firstborn, Who was begotten according to His nature, underwent yet another birth outside His nature, so that we too would understand that after our natural birth, we must undergo another (birth) outside our nature. As a spiritual being, He was unable to become physical until the time of physical birth. And so too physical beings, unless they undergo another birth, cannot become spiritual. The Son, Whose birth is beyond investigation, underwent another birth which can be investigated. So, by the one we learn that His majesty is limitless, and by the other we realize that His goodness is boundless. For His majesty increases without bounds, Whose first birth cannot be imagined by any mind, and His goodness overflows without limit, Whose other birth is proclaimed by every mouth. *Saint Ephrem the Syrian, Homily on Our Lord*

The Virgin today gives birth to the superessential One, And the earth proffers the cave to the unapproachable One. Angels with the shepherds sing song of praise; The Magi, with the star to guide pursue their way. For us there has been born, A newborn babe, the God before time. *Romanos the Melodist (Kontakia on the Person of Christ: On the Nativity I)*

The purpose of the advent of the Saviour, when He gave us His life-giving commandments as purifying remedies in our passionate state, was to cleanse the soul from the damage done by the first transgression and bring it back to its original state. What medicines are for a sick body, the commandments are for the passionate soul. *Saint Isaac of Syria*

The vine which produced the unfertilized fruit carried It as though in the encircling arms of the branches, and said: 'Thou, my fruit, my life, By Whom I am known as I am and was. Thou art my God. As I behold the seal of my virginity unbroken, I proclaim Thee the immutable Word become flesh. I know no seed; I know Thee as one who delivers from corruption; For I am pure after having Thee as issue from me; For Thou hast left my womb as Thou hast found it; Thou hast kept it safe. For this reason the whole creation rejoices with me, crying: Mary, full of grace.' *The Kontakia of Romanos, On the Nativity II*

Think not, therefore, it is of small things thou art hearing, when thou hearest of this birth, but rouse up thy mind, and straightway tremble, being told that God hath come upon earth. For so marvelous was this, and beyond expectation, that because of these things the very angels formed a choir, and in behalf of the world offered up their praise for them, and the prophets from the first were amazed at this, that "He was seen upon earth, and conversed with men(7)." Yea, for it is far beyond all thought to hear that God the Unspeakable, (8) the Unutterable, the Incomprehensible, and He that is equal to the Father, hath passed through a virgin's womb, and hath vouchsafed to be born of a woman, and to have Abraham and David for forefathers. *Saint John Chrysostom, Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Homily 2*

"Now the day of mercy has shown forth! Let no one persecute his neighbor with revenge for the wrong he has caused him! The day of joy has arrived! Let no one be guilty of causing sorrow and grief to another person. This is a cloudless and bright day!

"Let anger be stilled for it disturbs peace and tranquility. This is the day in which God descended to sinners!

Let the righteous man be ashamed to exalt himself over sinners. This is the day when the Lord of creation came to servants!

Let the master of the house humble himself in similar love to his servants. This is the day on which the Wealthy One became poor for our sake! Let not the rich be ashamed to share their table with the poor. *Saint Ephrem the Syrian*